

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A pneumatic tire comprising a tread and shoulders adjacent the tread, the tread comprising a central region and a pair of opposing side regions, the tread further comprising a circumferentially extending rib in the central region, and a plurality of steeply slanted grooves inclined at an angle relative to the circumferential direction of the tire in each side region, the tread having a tread surface at the outermost surface of the tread and a tread depth defined at the base of the grooves, wherein the steeply slanted grooves in each side region initiate at the junction of the central region and the side regions and terminate in the shoulders, the adjacent steeply slanted grooves meeting to form circumferentially adjacent tread blocks, the blocks extending from the central region to the shoulders, and a chamfer ~~chamfers~~ located at the axially innermost point of the ~~bleek~~ blocks, the chamfers extending into the junction of the steeply slanted grooves, wherein the lateral edges of the rib have a plurality of laterally oriented edges and circumferentially extending edges extending substantially straight between the laterally oriented edges at the tread surface when the tread is un-worn, the laterally oriented edges on each side of the rib being circumferentially offset from the laterally oriented edges on the opposing side of the rib, and extending from each laterally oriented edge toward the circumferentially adjacent laterally oriented edge is a chamfer, the chamfer circumferentially extending along the lateral edge of the rib, the rib having an almost straight configuration at the tread depth and wherein the block chamfer in each side region and the rib chamfer located on the adjacent lateral edge of the rib are axially adjacent.
 2. (original) The tire of claim 1 wherein the tread blocks extend continuously from the central region to the shoulders.
 3. (previously presented) The tire of claim 1 wherein the plurality of circumferentially extended edges connect with the plurality of laterally oriented edges, and wherein each rib chamfer extending from a laterally oriented edge decreases in width from the laterally oriented edge to the circumferentially adjacent laterally oriented edge.

4. (previously presented) The tire of claim 1 wherein the radial height of the rib chamfer decreases from the laterally oriented edge to the circumferentially adjacent laterally oriented edge.
5. (previously presented) The tire of claim 1 wherein the axially outermost edge of the rib chamfer, relative to the central region of the tire, gradually increases in height from the laterally oriented edge to the adjacent laterally oriented edge, while the axially innermost edge of the rib chamfer gradually decreases in height.
6. (original) The tire of claim 1 wherein the steeply slanted grooves have a non-constant width as the grooves extend from the central region to the shoulders, the grooves having a maximum width in the central 15% of each side region of the tread.
7. (original) The tire of claim 6 wherein the grooves have a maximum width of at least 1.5 times the minimum groove width of the steeply slanted grooves.
8. (original) The tire of claim 1 wherein the tread rib has a plurality of sipes, the sipes have a density of 2 to 8 sipes per inch (0.78-3.15 per cm).
9. (previously presented) The tire of claim 8 wherein the sipes extend laterally into the rib chamfers.
10. (original) The tire of claim 1 wherein the net-to-gross ratio of the tire decreases from the tread edge toward the tread center, with a maximum net-to-gross ratio at the equatorial plane of the tire.
11. (original) The tire of claim 1 wherein the net-to-gross ratio on each side of the rib, measured from the axially innermost edge of the rib chamfer to the axially outermost edge of the block chamfer, is in the range of 22 to 35%.
12. (previously presented) The tire of claim 1 wherein as the rib chamfer decreases in width and height along one direction of the tire, the adjacent block chamfer increases in width and height along the same direction of the tire.

13. (previously presented) The tire of claim 1 wherein the chamfers on opposing sides of the rib are circumferentially overlapping.
14. (previously presented) The tire of claim 1 wherein the axially outer edge of each rib chamfer, relative to the centerline of the rib, is convexly curved.
15. (previously presented) A pneumatic tire comprising a tread and shoulders adjacent the tread, the tread comprising a central region and a pair of opposing side regions, the tread further comprising a circumferentially extending rib in the central region, and a plurality of steeply slanted grooves inclined at an angle relative to the circumferential direction of the tire in each side region, the tread having a tread surface at the outermost surface of the tread and a tread depth defined at the base of the grooves,
wherein the steeply slanted grooves in each side region initiate at the junction of the central region and the side regions and terminate in the shoulders, the adjacent steeply slanted grooves meeting to form circumferentially adjacent tread blocks, the blocks extending from the central region to the shoulders, and a chamfer ~~chamfers~~ located at the axially innermost point of the ~~block~~ blocks, the chamfers extending into the junction of the steeply slanted grooves, and
wherein the lateral edges of the rib have a plurality of laterally oriented edges at the tread surface when the tread is un-worn, the laterally oriented edges on each side of the rib being circumferentially offset from the laterally oriented edges on the opposing side of the rib, and extending from each laterally oriented edge toward the circumferentially adjacent laterally oriented edge is a chamfer, the chamfer circumferentially extending along the lateral edge of the rib and the axially outer edge of each chamfer, relative to the centerline of the rib, being convexly curved, the rib having an almost straight configuration at the tread depth.
16. (new) A pneumatic tire comprising a tread and shoulders adjacent the tread, the tread comprising a central region and a pair of opposing side regions, the tread further comprising a circumferentially extending rib in the central region, and a plurality of steeply slanted grooves inclined at an angle relative to the circumferential direction of the tire in each side region, the tread having a tread surface at the outermost surface of the tread and a tread depth defined at the base of the grooves,
wherein the steeply slanted grooves in each side region initiate at the junction

of the central region and the side regions and terminate in the shoulders, the adjacent steeply slanted grooves meeting to form circumferentially adjacent tread blocks, the blocks extending from the central region to the shoulders, and a chamfer located at the axially innermost point of the blocks, the chamfers extending into the junction of the steeply slanted grooves,

wherein the lateral edges of the rib have a plurality of laterally oriented edges and circumferentially extending edges extending substantially straight between the laterally oriented edges at the tread surface when the tread is un-worn, and extending from each laterally oriented edge toward the circumferentially adjacent laterally oriented edge is a chamfer, the chamfer circumferentially extending along the lateral edge of the rib, the rib having an almost straight configuration at the tread depth and

wherein the block chamfer in each side region and the rib chamfer located on the adjacent lateral edge of the rib are axially adjacent.

The above amendments are supported by the original specification.